

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 01351 230904Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGRE-00 AID-05 EB-08 CIAE-00
COME-00 INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 PA-02 USIA-15
H-02 L-03 NSC-05 SS-15 /081 W
-----127427 230916Z /17

P 230737Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 083
INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

UNCLAS TUNIS 1351

DEPT PASS USAID AND USDA

RABAT FOR AGATT

CAIRO FOR GEORGE POPE, USDA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAID, EAGR, TS
SUBJECT: PL-480 TITLE I: TUNISIAN REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL CORN

REF: STATE 23043, TUNIS 476, 77 TUNIS 7779, 77 TUNIS 8055

1. EMBASSY TODAY (FEBRUARY 22) RECEIVED FORMAL FREQUEST
FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR ADDITIONAL 35,000
TONS OF CORN, UNDER PL-480 TITLE I, TO HELP MEET SERIOUS
LIVESTOCK FEEDING PROBLEM. NOTE POINTS OUT THAT THIS
QUANTITY REPRESENTS BALANCE OF 60,000 TONS REQUESTED
BY GOT IN ITS NOTE OF NOVEMBER 3, 1977 (UU TUNIS 7779).
LATEST NOTE REFERS TO ESPECIALLY LARGE IMPORTS OF
GRANS, SGTRAINING TUNISIAN BALANCE OF PAYMENTS, WHICH
GOT HAS HAD TO MAKE AS A RESULT OF OVER ONE YEAR OF
DROUGHT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. IT ALSO CITES ONGOING
GOT EFFORTS (SEE TUNIS 476) TI IMPORT FORAGE CONCEN-
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TRATES AND FEEDGRAINS TO SAVE BOVINE AND OVINE BREED-
ING STOCK.

2. RECENT FIELD TRIPS BY USAID AGRICULTURAL SPECIALIST,
ECONOMIC COUNSELOR AND AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE KUHL HAVE
ALL CONFIRMED CONTINUING EXTREMELY SERIOUS LIVESTOCK
STTUATION--WEAKENED ANIMALS AND SEVERE SHORTAGE OF FEED--

ESPECIALLY IN AREAS SOUTH OF MEDJERDA VALLEY.

3. MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE HAS APOVIDED MEMORANDUM DETAILING SITUATION AS FOLLOWS, (A) BECAUSE OF DROUGHT DURING 1976-77 GROWING SEASON: (QL ONLY 250, 000 TONS OF HAY WAS PRODUCED AS COMPARED WITH NORMAL 400,000 TONS HARVEST; (2) DECREASE OF 22 PERCENT IN SOWN AREA MEANT THIS AREA YIELDED NO STRAW; AND (3) THERE WAS 25 PERCENT DECREASE IN RANGE PRODUCTION. (B) AS DROUGHT CONTINUED INTO CURRENT GROWING SEASON AND EARLY 1978, LOSS IN CATTLE FEED AS INCREASED BY: (1) REDUCTOION IN SURFACE WSOWN BECAUSE OF SHORTAGE OF SEED (WL REDUCTION IN YIELD OF CULTIVATED FORAGE (HAY AND /GRAIN); AND (3) SEVERE DAMAGE TO PASTURES AND RANGE LAND, AGGRAVATED BY OVER-GRAZING DURING LAMBING SEASON, MEANING PASTURES WILL TAKE LONGER TO RECOVER PRODUCTIVITY. (C) IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR IT WAS DETERMINED THAT: (1) NO FORAGE STOCKS EXISTED; (2) LIVESTOCK WAS UNDERNOURISHED, LEADING TO LOSS OF GROWTH AND INCREASED MORTALITY; (3) OUTLOOK WAS UNCERTAIN ON YIELD OF NEW CROPS BECAUSE OF LACK OF FALL AND EARLY WINTER RAINS. (D) MINISTRY EXPECTS IT WILL TAKE TWO OR THREE YEARS TO RESTORE FEED PRODUCTION TO LEVELS SUFFICIENT TO BALANCE NEEDS. PROBLEM TO BE MET WITH: (1) IMPORTS OF FORAGE CONCENTRATES, CORN, BARLEY AND OILSEED CAKE; EXTENSION OF IRRIGATED FORAGE CROPS; USE OF AGRICULTURE UNCLASSIFIED

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TURAL AND FOOD BYPRODUCTS; AND, SLAUGHTER OF DEFICIENT OR LESS PRODUCTIVE CATTLE. (3) NEEDS FOR FIRST SIX MONTHS ARE ESTIMATED TO BE 200,000 TONS OF ALFALFA PELLETS AND 90,000 TONS OF FEEDGRANS. (F) ABOVE OUTLINED MEASURES ARE EXPECTED TO: (1) INCREASE MEAT AND MILK PRODUCTION IN SHORT TERM; (2) ENCOURAGE FARMERS TO RETAIN LIVESTOCK, AND (3) ALLOW FOR CREATION OF STOCKS TO HELP MEET POSSIBLE FEED SCARCITY UNTIL NEXT FALL.

4. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, TUNISIAN FARMER'S UNION AND AGRICULTURE OFFICIALS HAVE SINCE JANUARY REPEATEDLY APPROACHED US (TUNIS 476) ABOUT POSSIBLE FURTHER PL-480 TO ASSIST WITH GOT PROGRAM TO SAVE LIVESTOCK. AFTER TWO WEEKS OF GOOD RAIN COVERING MOST OF TUNISIA, GREENING MUCH OF LANDSCAPE, MOST DRAMATIC MOMENT IS PASSED. HOWEVER, LIVESTOCK PROBLEM--PARTICULARLY NEED FOR MORE CORN OR OTHER TDN SUPPLEMENT--REMAINS. EXTRAORDINARY IMPORTS OF FEEDGRAINS MUST CONTINUE FOR REASONS CITED BY GOT. (AS USAID FORAGE EXPERTS EXPLAIN, EARLY PLANTINGS OF OATS AND VETCH WERE LOST TO DROUGHT AND LATER GERMINATING PLANTINGS ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE WEAK YIELDS BE-

CAUSE OF INADEQUATE TILLERING.)

5. EMBASSY SHARES GOT APPRECIATION FOR SUBSTANTIAL
PL-480 ASSISTANCE TO DATE--AND WE ARE AWARE OF TIGHT
CONSTRAINTS ON FURTHER TITLE I ALLOCATIONS. NEVERTHE-
LESS, WE URGE WASHINGTON AGENCIES TO DO THEIR BEST TO
BE RESPONSIVE TO THIS TUNISIAN REQUEST.
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